THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (d) No Sir, migrant labour inside the country are covered under various provisions of the Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979. This Act provides for regular payment of wages, equal pay for equal work irrespective of sex, displacement allowance, journey allowance, residential accommodation, medical facility etc. to inter-state migrant workmen. In the case of migrant labour going outside the country for employment, the government is regulating the emigration of unskilled and semi-skilled labour under provisions of the Emigration Act, 1983 and the Rules made thereunder and their wages are determined in consultation with the concerned Indian Missions abroad. For the Emigrant workers, the Government have already introduced the Emigration Amendment Bill, 2002 in the Lok Sabha on 21.11.2002 with the objective of setting up a Central Manpower Export Promotion Council and also for Indian Overseas Workers' Welfare Fund.

Strikes and lock-outs

295. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the observations made by the Institute for Human Development that "while the incidence of strikes in India had declined over the years, that of lock-outs had considerably increased", and further comments that "the recent Supreme Court judgement was product of the prevailing middle class mood rather than a judicious verdict;

(b) if so, whether Government are thinking of creating conditions where lock-outs could be reduced substantially and workers' industrial relations activities are injudiciously curtailed; and

(c) if so, the detail thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) Yes, Sir a study by the Institute of Human Development (IHD) reveals that during 1991-97 the share of strikes in total mandays lost declined while that of lock-outs increased. However, the Institute has clarified that the observations on the recent Supreme Court Judgement were not that of IHD but of some of the participants in a recent seminar organised by IHD and Indian Society of Labour Economics, on this issue.

(b) and (c) Safeguards are provided under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to prevent illegal lock outs and to protect the interests of the workers.

Workplace safety for industrial workers

296. SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have carried out any survey regarding the workplace safety of the industrial workers in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons theefor; and

(c) whether it is a fact that many safety regulations of the Statute Book are not effectively implemented and if so, the steps proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) The Government have not carried out any comprehensive survey regarding workplace safety of industrial workers in the country.

(b) There is no mandatory provision for carrying out surveys regarding workplace safety of industrial workers. However, the Factories Act, 1948 provides for survey of workplace safety which are carried out in the factories by the Chief Inspectors of Factories in the States. Similarly, the Directorate General of Mines Safety carries out such surveys in the mines.

(c) The safety provisions prescribed by the Acts and Rules framed thereunder are by and large complied with by the employers. However, whenever any violation of these provisions are noticed, necessary action is taken by the respective enforcement agency by way of issuing show cause notices, improvement notices and violation letters. The prosecution cases are also launched, wherever necessary.

Exemption to SEZs from EPF Act

297. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to exempt the Special Economic Zones from the purview of the Employees Provident Fund Act;